

OAC to Build New Testing Laboratory

Construction of a new Pilot Lot Laboratory at the Ordnance Ammunition Center at Joliet and expansion of the laboratory's activities was announced today by Brig. Gen. W. E. Laidlaw, OAC commanding general.

Bids on the erection of the new building will be requested by the U. S. Corps of Engineers' District Office at Chicago within the next

30 days. Actual construction is expected to start in December and be finished in February.

AS SOON as it is completed and the present laboratory moved into the new building, the laboratory staff will add metallurgical analysis to the present series of tests made on metal parts which go into the artillery shells, bombs, rockets, etc. that OAC's 11 ammunition loading plants turn out.

These metal parts are supplied by private manufacturers. All of the 1,600 firms west of the Alleghenies that make them are required to send "pilot lots"—samples of their initial production of an item—to the laboratory for approval before they start mass production.

The lab staff of seven trained government technicians literally tear the samples apart and inspect them for defects which might prevent proper functioning of the finished ammunition.

THE OBJECTIVE is to see that the Army Ordnance Corps gets from every manufacturer exactly what is ordered and all the quality it is paying for. The net result of the laboratory's work is substantial dollar savings to the government and higher quality, more uniform ammunition for the use of U. S. and allied troops.

To be located near the present OAC Administration building, on the "KNK side" of the Joliet Arsenal grounds, the new laboratory will be of frame and asbestos shingle construction, one story, 50x100 feet in size. It will be air conditioned to protect the expensive testing equipment and guarantee its hairline accuracy.

THE LABORATORY was established at OAC in July 1951 as a part of the Center's inspection division, which is headed by E. J. Cottrell. C. W. Van Ordstrand is chief of the laboratory and directs its operations.

In the 14 months since it was set up, the laboratory has inspected more than 800 pilot lots submitted by about 500 manufacturers. Metal parts tested in these 800 lots range from tiny steel springs used in fuzes to the casings of 10,000-pound aerial bombs and the electrical connections of "bazooka" shells.